

Dedication
300 years of
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Guruship
(1708 - 2008)

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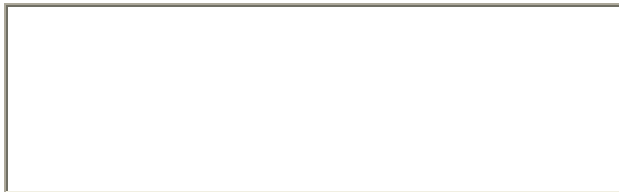
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PREFACE

In conjunction with the 300th anniversary of the Gurta Gaddi of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, we are pleased to bring to you: "Our Guru – An Introduction to the Splendour of Our Eternal Guru" Our Guru aims to provide summary information on Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to one and all. We hope the reader will develop and have full faith and believe in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as our eternal Guru.

The article is based on references available within the Sikh community, such as the Sri Nanak Prakash and Gurbertap Suraj Prakash Granth, Gurbilash Patshahi Chevi, Gurbilash Patshahi Chevi Desvi, Panth Prakash, Mehma Prakash, Mahan Kosh, Encyclopedia of Sikhism, Gur Pur Prakash, Rahet Nama (Bhai Nand Lal).

This book is made available free of charge. However, if you wish to contribute to the printing and shipping cost, we accept a voluntary donation of £2 pounds.

Lastly, we would like to stress that this is a modest attempt to contribute to the Sikh community and whilst every effort has been taken to ensure that the quality and accuracy of the information is of the highest standards, we look forward to your valuable feedback so that we can improve this edition. Hence, if you have any comments or suggestions to improve this further, please feel free to email your comments to contact@unitedsikhs.org or contact@sngsacademy.com

On behalf of the

SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB ACADEMY AND UNITED SIKHS

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Humbly Presented by

SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI ACADEMY & UNITED SIKHS

SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI, OUR GURU

INTRODUCTION

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the universal Guru of the Sikhs was first compiled and instituted as a medium to unite with Waheguru by Sri Guru Arjun Sahib Ji. Guruji gathered Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) of the earlier four Guru Sahibaan together with Bani (hymns) of 17 Bhats (poets of the Guru's court) and 15 Bhagats (saints). The compilation of this invaluable treasure in the form of a dharm granth (religious scripture), called the Pothi Sahib (book containing Gurbani), was done at the banks of Sri Ramsar Sahib, Amritsar. Bhai Gurdaas Ji was chosen as its writer. The first parkash (formal reading) in Harmandir Sahib was carried out in 1604. Baba Buddha Ji was selected as the first granthi (custodian priest) for the Pothi Sahib (book containing Gurbani). From that day onwards, Guruji gave utmost respect to the Pothi Sahib (book containing Gurbani) by placing it higher than Guruji's throne and declared that this Pothi Sahib (book containing Gurbani) is the place where Waheguru resides.



In order to manifest Guruji's perpetual form in this world, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji officially bestowed guruship upon Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji three days before he left his physical body at Sri Hazoor Sahib in 1708. At that time, Guruji explained that, with Waheguru's

blessings, the Khalsa Panth (Sikh community) was created and gave instructions that Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji will be the next Guru for the Khalsa Panth (Sikh community). This declaration made Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji the eternal, everlasting Guru of the Sikhs.

GURUJI, THE ENLIGHTENER

Every aspect of life is included and explained in detail in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji i.e. Waheguru, Guru, soul, bliss, universe, mind, ego, maya (illusion), hukam (Waheguru's will), karma (deeds), gyan (knowledge), bhagti (devotion), Naam (Waheguru's Name), kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru) and sangat (congregation) are thoroughly explained. Waheguru is indivisible and infinite. There is none that can explain Waheguru's unlimited abilities and powers. Waheguru is the source that created this universe which symbolises Sargun (Waheguru's physical form) as opposed to Nirgun (Waheguru's unlimited, invisible form). It is said in the Vaaran of Bhai Gurdaas Ji that if one wants to describe Waheguru's vastness, one just needs to imagine that it is like having millions of universes in a single strand of hair.



Likewise, the human soul which is part of Waheguru resides in the physical body but with the presence of ego, created by maya (illusion), the soul is unable to realise its true form, atma, which is part of Parm-Atma (Waheguru). This is the primary reason to have a true Guru - to

instil righteous qualities which include Naam (Waheguru's Name), simran (constant remembrance of Waheguru), kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru), katha (spiritual dialogue), gyan (knowledge), bhagti (devotion), dhyan (concentration) and vairaag (detachment) into the self that has been blinded by accumulated bad deeds done in the past. These qualities purify the mind which then leads to the realisation of atma (the true self) as the five evils (lust, anger, greed, emotional attachment and ego) are conquered and eliminated. The way to the above realisation is only possible with Guruji's blessings and guidance.

As a whole, it can be said that Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji illuminates life by eliminating the darkness of ignorance. Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) leads to peaceful living, hindering violence. Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is a pool of knowledge and the ultimate guide to life. Achieving all the above is only possible by having full faith in and pure love for Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).



FOUR TYPES OF GURUS

One day, during the time of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, some Sikhs asked Guruji how to attain salvation from the cycle of birth and death

and immerse in Waheguru. Listening to the question, Guruji explained that salvation is only possible with a true Guru's blessings. And it must be a true Guru. Guruji further explained that basically there are four types of Gurus.

Bheringhi Guru

Bheringhi is a type of wasp which can transform one or two types of other insects to become like itself.

Likewise, there is this type of Guru who can only lead and bless certain tribes or ethnic groups.

Paras Guru

Paras is a philosopher's stone that can convert eight types of materials, such as steel, into gold when it comes into contact with these materials.

Similarly, a Paras Guru can only lead a limited group of people who have particularly done the Guru's seva (service). But just as a paras cannot turn any of the eight materials into another paras, this type of Guru cannot establish another Guru with all the qualities which he has.

Bawan Chandan Guru (Sandalwood Guru)

A sandalwood tree spreads its scent to many other trees surrounding it during a certain time of the year, except for one tree which is the *bance* (bamboo tree). Likewise, this type of Guru cannot lead or guide his devotees throughout their lifetime and like the bamboo tree, a person with a very bad attitude, even though he might be in close proximity to the Guru, will not be able to gain knowledge from that Guru.

Deepak Guru (Light Guru)

This is the supreme of all types of Gurus who is similar to light and can enlighten everything which comes within the Guru's boundary and there is no difference when another light is lighted up. In turn, the new light can enlighten others who in turn enlighten others e.g. Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji blessed Bhai Bhegirathji who then lead Bhai Mansukhji towards Guruji and when Bhai Mansukhji went to Sangladeep, he talked about Guruji's knowledge to King Shivnaab upon which the King became the devotee of Guruji as well.

Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji concludes that Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji is the greatest Guru. If any Sikh reads or listens to Guruji's Bani (hymns) with love, Guruji will grant him brahm gyan (ultimate spiritual knowledge) i.e. without performing difficult penance or spiritual practices, moksha (salvation) will be attained and the soul will merge in Waheguru.

THE NEED FOR GURBANI

Once, some egoistic pandits and sanyasis came to Sri Guru Amar Daas Ji and asked Guruji, "Why did Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji, in the presence of 4 Vedas, 6 Shasters, 18 Puranas, 27 Simritiyas and many other dharm granths (religious scriptures), come up with Gurbani when these dharam granths (religious scriptures) have been the medium of salvation for human beings for such a long time?" In response to the above question, Guruji explained that the aforementioned dharm granths (religious scriptures) do not contain universal Bani (hymns)



which can be uttered by all. Furthermore, they are limited to certain religions, castes and ethnic groups. All of these dharm granths (religious scriptures) are read and embraced by very limited people, usually from the higher classes of society, who have a faithful mind. Even

then, they have to struggle very hard to liberate themselves from worldly attachments such that those who practise the teachings of these dharm granths (religious scriptures) hide far away from civilisation. Only after much penance does pure love for Waheguru develop and do they attain salvation.

On the other hand, Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is universal and is written for all in simple Gurmukhi (the Punjabi alphabet) letters which can be understood by all. It can be read or sung by any person from any religion, caste or ethnic group. Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) has not been written for a certain time or period of time, Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is forever. Rich or poor, the teachings of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) are the same for all. Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus)



teaches us to remember Waheguru all the time, without any restriction, whilst carrying on with worldly requirements. Additionally, by singing Gurbani kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru), moksha (salvation) is easily achievable. The person

reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) does not have to be very highly educated, hence, both the educated and the non-educated are blessed by Guruji through Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

Other Banis (hymns) are like water in a well where only those people who put in a lot of effort can achieve its source of water and it is limited to only those who have access to the well. However, Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is like clouds which produce lots of rainwater such that anybody can have access to the water.

Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) solely emphasizes pure love and without this love other dharam granths (religious scriptures) are left dry. Reading the other dharam granths (religious scriptures), divine knowledge is not gained, thereby leaving the readers without spiritual knowledge and instead more ego is born.

Guruji then said, “Dear Pandits, think about it deep within your heart, even though water in a well and from the rain look the same, remember their sources are different. Similarly, dharam granths (religious scriptures) are written by deities, aavtaras, rishis, munnis, pandits etc. but Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is from Waheguru who is the Creator of all the writers of those dharam granths (religious scriptures). So don’t doubt Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) which, when read with love and Sahibotion, will result in salvation from this frightening worldly ocean.” Listening to Guruji, they felt such bliss that immediately they fell at Guruji’s feet.

SHABAD GURU

Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is conveyed through Shabad (the Word) in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Shabad (the Word) in Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is also defined as the essence of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) which, like an arrow, pierces the heart and resides deep within it, chasing away all evil residing there. Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is Guru and Shabad (the Word) is Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and when it is said that Guruji resides in the heart, this refers to the Shabad Guru (the Word of the Guru) which is more commonly known as Naam (Waheguru's Name). The dhun (rhythm) of Naam (Waheguru's Name) is beating in all but it is not realised by most as the veil of maya (illusion) prevents it from being heard by every individual. That is why Shabad Guru (the Word of the Guru) as the arrow is essential to rip apart the veil of maya (illusion) and introduce the individual to his true self.



According to Bhai Gurdaas Ji in his Vaaran, Shabad (the Word) is obtained from Waheguru and through this Shabad (the Word) humanity releases itself from the illusions of maya. By reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) consistently, the darkness of life which is the unknown purpose of existence is eliminated. That is why reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is of utmost importance, especially nitnem Banis (daily prayers) specified by Guruji. It leads to the never-ending dhun (vibration) of Naam (Waheguru's Name) in oneself. Shabad (the Word) is the form of Guruji and immersing oneself in it reveals the Truth, resulting in everlasting peace of mind. The description of Waheguru as in the Shabad (the Word) is only known from the abode of Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji. Bhai Gurdaas Ji says that reading or listening to Gurbani i.e. concentrating on the Shabad (the Word) is the only way to remember Guruji and with the bliss that ensues it will be apparent that Waheguru is deep within your heart. Once a person realises the above, Bhai Sahib Ji says that he then only concentrates on the Shabad (the Word). Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) becomes his life. The point comes when he sees Waheguru in everything and there is no enemy, no sadness, no duality, no ego and eventually maya (illusion) is eliminated completely and he becomes jeewan mukat (he achieves everlasting moksha in his lifetime).



Bhai Sahib Ji says that there is no difference between Guru and Shabad (the Word). Upon this realisation, the amrit in the body which is the Naam (Waheguru's Name) purifies the whole body and mind which leads to the ultimate goal of life which is union with Waheguru.

SANGAT

One of the most effective and fastest ways to instil Shabad (the Word) in oneself is to listen to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) in the form of sangat (congregation). As Guruji says, Waheguru dwells in sangat (congregation). In sangat (congregation), other thoughts are more effectively hindered and the energy produced focuses the mind and unites Sikhs with the Guru which then results in freedom from worldly entanglements. Continuous sangat (congregation) involvement will result in jeewan bhagti, that is spending one's whole life at the feet of Guruji away from worldly false sensations. Bhai Gurdaas Ji further says that a person who is detached from Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) or sangat (congregation) will be devastated in the cycle of birth and death in all the 8.4 million types of lives and to be reborn as a human will not be viable. Sangat (congregation) is the way that Guruji showed to free Sikhs from the five evils (lust, anger, greed, emotional attachment and ego).

PRACTISING GURBANI IN LIFE

Once in Amritsar, during the time of Sri Guru Ram Daas Sahib Ji, four Sikhs, namely Bhai Jappa, Bhai Meyiya, Bhai Neyiya and Bhai Talsa requested Guruji to provide them with advice and guidance on how a householder or a married man should bring up his family and yet practise Sikhism. They asked how one can avoid the influence of maya (illusion) and without much effort free oneself from emotional attachments whilst living with one's family.



Listening to their plea, Sri Guru Ram Daas Sahib Ji encouraged them to practise Gurbani to achieve a practical way of life and explained, “A man who works day and night to fulfil his worldly requirements and in doing so starts enjoying fulfilling the tasks, will continue doing it for the rest of his life. Similarly, the same interest and keenness has to be developed when reading and listening to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). When one reads and listens to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) in the manner mentioned above, one will start to understand the meaning of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and when these meanings are contemplated over and over again, the essence of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) will start to change the person and ultimately unite him with Waheguru. When this happens, it doesn’t matter which worldly activities are carried out, the person will not be engrossed in them as his mind will be attached to Guruji. This is the practical way of life that is taught in Sikhism, to be liberated even when living as part of this world fulfilling the needs of a householder.”

GURBANI IS GURU

As protection from this blazing world, a world of greed and evil, a burning hell of pride and ego and in order to cool down the flame in the uneasy hearts of men, to rekindle the drying and dying spirit of men, to unite detached souls with Waheguru, to liberate mankind, to unshackle the whole world from the trap of maya (illusion), Waheguru Himself revealed Himself to this world through Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji (Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Page 1395).



Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji says that Shabad (the Word) is his Guru and his thoughts are its follower. Sri Guru Ram Das Sahib Ji further elaborated the statement very clearly and said that Bani (Gurbani) is Guru and Guru is Bani (Gurbani). This laid a solid foundation towards the guruship of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) has all the qualities of a Guru - to eliminate the darkness of illusion and to illuminate Sikhs through spiritual awareness. But this is only possible if the Sikh opens his heart and lets the blessings of Guruji make him realise that. As mentioned earlier, Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is like rainwater and if a Sikh remains in the fog of ignorance and darkness of maya (illusion), how can he enjoy the shower of blessings of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus)? That is why, despite the priceless and precious presence of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), some still cannot enjoy the true meaning of life.

UNIQUENESS OF GURBANI

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the universal Guru which includes Bani (hymns) of revered personalities from other religions. Sri Guru Arjun Sahib Ji incorporated these Banis (hymns) which have teachings similar or related to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), including worshipping a single God and laying stress upon social equality among all.

Tolerance and sharing were the basis of Guruji's teachings to create a perfect human being. The principles of these teachings were unbiased making it an extraordinary and distinguished religion for all times. When founding this religion, Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji clearly specified that he only believed in one Waheguru. The whole of Sri Guru Granth

Sahib Ji emphasizes the same and is also the mechanism to unite humans with Waheguru.

Gurbani does not emphasize conversion of religion but explains the way to be spiritual. Gurbani teaches a Hindu to be a better Hindu and a Muslim to be a better Muslim.

Pearl S Buck (Nobel-laureate): I have studied the scriptures of other great religions but I do not find elsewhere the same power of appeal to the heart and mind as I find in these volumes of the English version of Guru Granth Sahib.

Duncan Greenless: Guru Granth Sahib is certainly one of the world's masterpieces of poetry. The Guru Granth Sahib has been rightly called the cream of Indian thought - the essence of Hindu philosophy.

Prof. Arnold Toynbee: In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion and its scripture, Guru Granth, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world.

GURBANI FROM 1469 TO 1708

Let us now explore the supremacy of Our Guru, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, by considering the respect and reverence given to Our Guru by all the ten Gurus even before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was declared as Our Guru by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji.

SRI GURU NANAK SAHIB JI

Dialogue with Siddhas

The Siddhas asked Guruji, “Who is the Guru of whom you are a follower? ” Guruji answered, “Shabad is my Guru and my concentration, its follower.” Guruji added, “Dear Siddhas, apart from Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and sangat (congregation), I don’t rely on anything else even a little.” Bhai Gurdaas Ji in his Vaaran wrote that Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji won over the dialogue with the whole group of Siddhas through the utterance of Shabad (the Word).



Curing the Leper

During Guruji’s travels, once Guruji came upon a leper who was crying for help as everyone had abandoned him to stay in a hut deep inside the jungle. Guruji, having mercy on him, asked Bhai Mardana to play the rebab and Guruji started to sing kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru). On listening to the kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru) with Sahibotian, the leper got cured and received the gift of liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Proclamation to Bhai Lalo Ji

Guruji told Bhai Lalo Ji that, “Whenever Bani (hymns) comes from the source, Waheguru, I will convey it to the world as it is.”

The Gurbani Pothi

Before leaving his physical body in 1539, Guruji handed over the Gurbani Pothi (book containing Gurbani) to Sri Guru Angad Sahib Ji which also included Bani (hymns) from Bhagats and Mahapursh that Guruji had obtained during his travels. The Gurbani Pothi (book containing Gurbani) was then handed over when the Guruship was transferred from one Guru to another until it reached Sri Guru Arjun Sahib Ji.

SRI GURU ANGAD SAHIB JI

Baba Lehna Ji in Guruji's Refuge



Sri Guru Angad Sahib Ji (Baba Lehna Ji) got the opportunity to do seva (service), worship in sangat (congregation) and obey the instructions of Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji and finally immersed himself in Guruji by listening to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). According to Sikh history, once when Bhai Jodh Ji (Bhai Jodh Ji from the Kehrey lineage is said to have been one of the prime devotees of Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji) came to Baba Lehna Ji's village,

as was his daily routine during amrit vela (the early hours of the day), he passed in front of Guruji's house, reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) in a sweet tone. Attracted by the Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) read by Bhai Jodh Ji, Guruji followed him and then stopped Bhai Sahib and asked him whose Bani (hymns) he was reading. Bhai Sahib told Guruji that it is Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji's, who was then residing in Kartarpur Sahib. On hearing that, Baba Lehna Ji decided to meet Sri

Guru Nanak Sahib Ji after which Baba Lehna Ji became Sri Guru Angad Sahib Ji.



The Path to Guruship

As written by a Bhat in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Baba Lehna Ji worshipped Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji and Waheguru with pure devotion and infinite love. The foundation leading to the above was the blending of Shabad (the Word) into the thought of Baba Lehna Ji through which he became the greatest Deepak Guru, Sri Guru Angad Sahib Ji.

The Outcome of Consulting Gurbani

In Khadur Sahib, Bhai Keddari Ji made a plea, “The whole world is indulging in lustful activities and anger which have taken over everyone’s mind. Fearing this, I’m seeking refuge in Guruji, please Guruji save me from burning myself in these sins.” Guruji told him that purity is only viable when Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is sought and consulted and when one takes refuge in Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), the heart is purified, positive personal qualities grow with the birth of spiritual awareness and true knowledge is obtained in one’s heart which hinders all the five evils, especially worldly attachment.

The Outcome of Reading and Contemplating Gurbani

Bhai Gujjar Ji, a Sikh from Lahore came to Khadur Sahib and made a plea to Guruji to clear his doubts on how a man can attain moksha (salvation) when he is so busy bringing up his family and there is limited or no time to meditate. Guruji advised that he should always read Sri Japji Sahib with concentration. When read consistently, the return is enormous. Guruji told him to make sure that he contemplates the meaning of Sri Japji Sahib and to blend himself in those meanings with his every breath. By doing this, moksha (salvation) is surely attainable.

SRI GURU AMAR DAAS SAHIB JI



Coming to Sri Guru Angad Sahib Ji

Baba Amar Dass Ji was 72 years old when he started looking for a true Guru. The eagerness one day bore fruit when the daughter-in-law of Guruji's younger brother Baba Tejo Ji, Bibi Amro Ji (Bibi Amro Ji was Sri Guru Angad Sahib Ji's daughter), was reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) during the wee hours of the morning. Baba Amar Dass Ji felt great bliss such that he had never felt before.

Immediately after Bibiji finished reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), Baba Amar Dass Ji asked her to read it again. He was so overwhelmed by the blissfulness obtained that he asked Bibiji to take him to Sri Guru Angad Sahib Ji. Baba Amar Dass Ji became Sri Guru

Amar Dass Sahib Ji by the distinctive and magnetic pull of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

The True Bani

Guruji writes in Anand Sahib's (Prayer of Bliss) Pauri (stanza) 23:

Come beloved Sikhs (disciples) of the True Guru and sing true hymns.

Sing the hymns of the Guru, as the Guru's hymns are the most supreme hymns among all other vocals.

Gurbani's First Writer

Guruji concentrated mainly on Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and distributed it in the form of gutke (compilations of different Banis) to many different areas. This was essential in order to avoid the mixing of self-composed poems by unfaithful people into Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). For the above task, Guruji chose his grandson, Baba Mohan Ji's son Baba Sansram Ji. Baba Sansram Ji used to write Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and at the same time learned the meaning of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) from Guruji.

Gurbani's Katha (Spiritual Dialogue)

Bhai Bulla Ji was a pandit. As a padda (teacher), his duty was to teach. One day, he came into Guruji's darbar (court) and asked Guruji how he could attain moksha (salvation) when he was not able to do any sangat's seva (congregational service) as, being a Brahmin, nobody would give him any opportunity to do so. Guruji blessed him and said,

“Read Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) with love and then explain the meaning of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) to the sangat (congregation). Teach Sikhs the Guru’s path, write books on Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and distribute them among Sikhs. This is the seva (service) which will lead you to moksha (salvation).”

Reading Gurbani is Part of a Sikh’s Reht (Code of Conduct)

Once Baba Buddha Ji and other Sikhs asked Guruji how a Sikh should conduct his life. Guruji explained that a Sikh must rise early in the morning and after taking a shower, in full concentration, he must contemplate his atma (real self) and then read Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) with a pure heart. Continuous contemplation of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) with every breath is the life of a Sikh.

Conservation of Gurbani

Guruji instructed Baba Mohan Ji (Guruji’s son), while handing over the Gurbani Pothis (book containing Gurbani) and gutke (compilations of Gurbani), to take care of this Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) with full respect and not to pass it to anybody except the fifth Guru.

Gurbani – the Liberator

Guruji constructed Baouli Sahib in Sri Govindwal Sahib and blessed Sikhs with the opportunity to liberate themselves from the cycle of birth and death by taking 84 dips at Baouli Sahib and reading Sri Japji Sahib after each dip on every step of the 84 steps which lead to the baouli (well).

SRI GURU RAM DAAS SAHIB JI

Bani is Guru

It is clearly written in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji that Bani is Guru and Guru is Bani (Page 982). Sikhs should, therefore, not have any doubt about Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). On Page 1310, it is written that in Guruji's utterance is Waheguru and to follow this true path will lead to moksha (salvation).



The Daily Life of a Sikh

In Amritsar, Guruji put into words the Sikh Rehat Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) which was then added into Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji on Pages 305-306. In this, Guruji specified that reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is a Sikh's key responsibility.

Through Gurbani You Can Know Waheguru

On Page 308 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Guruji instructs Sikhs to respectfully believe that Waheguru's Bani (hymns) is the Truth because it came from the Creator Himself, Waheguru. On Page 304, Guruji specified that the essence of Waheguru is contained in Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and Guruji instructs Sikhs to practise and love Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). This will ultimately transform a Sikh such that he realises the essence of his atma (true self) which is Waheguru. As a human's essence is Waheguru, a devout Sikh who has totally

surrendered himself to Guruji will eventually realise his essence. In other words, he will be the practical manifestation of Waheguru.

SRI GURU ARJUN SAHIB JI

Bringing the Gurbani Pothi (book containing Gurbani) from Govindwal Sahib



Guruji had utmost respect for Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). He himself went to Govindwal Sahib and sat in front of Baba Mohan Ji's house and sang kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru) to humbly request Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). After obtaining the Gurbani Pothi (book

containing Gurbani), Guruji placed it on a beautifully decorated palki (palanquin) and did not sit in the palki (palanquin) or even ride on horseback. Instead, Guruji walked barefoot on the left hand side of the palki (palanquin) until Amritsar (It is a sign of respect to remain on the left just as pekerma (circumambulations of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) is done from left to right, keeping Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji on the right hand side). At Amritsar, at the Athsath Teerath which is near the Dukh Bhenjeni tree at the banks of Harmandir Sahib's sarowar, Guruji asked Baba Buddha Ji to perform chaur sahib seva (fanning of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) and kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru) was sung throughout the night.

Praise of Gurbani

At Ramsar, Amritsar, during a large congregation, when preparations to do the first parkash (formal reading) of the Pothi Sahib (book containing Gurbani) were in progress, Guruji announced that this dharm granth (religious scripture) is the ship prepared to transport everyone across the worldly ocean. Whoever listens to, reads and then contemplates Gurbani (hymns of the Guru) with devotion will effortlessly become a passenger on the ship with Guruji who becomes the captain of the ship Himself and will navigate the ship across the worldly ocean to the port of eternity.

Guruji added that his physical body will not remain forever and will therefore not be accessible for all time. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is Guruji's heart which will be available and accessible always.

First Parkash of Gurbani

After the compiling and then assigning of appropriate ragas (melodies) to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), in 1604, the compilation was sent to Lahore for binding. As soon as the binding work was completed, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was brought to Harmandir Sahib from Ramsar Sahib by Baba Budhha Ji who carried Sri Guru Granth Sahib



Ji on his head while Sri Guru Arjun Sahib Ji did chaur sahib seva (fanning of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). In Harmandir Sahib, Guruji sat lower than Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Observing this, the sangat (congregation) developed utmost respect for Gurbani (hymns of the

Gurus). Further to that, Guruji didn't give any instruction that day. Instead, Guruji asked Baba Budhha Ji to convey the Hukumnama (edict) from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Respect for Gurbani

Guruji instructed Sikhs to consider Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) as the highest authority and to respect Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) more than Guruji's physical body. Guruji also specified that whenever Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is to be written, it has to be made sure that the spelling, with the correct lega-matra (Gurmukhi letters and vowels), is used. Guruji further said that Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus)



must be read with correct punctuation and pronunciation and no one should try to add or remove any word, letter or vowel from Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) as the person who does so will only be showing disrespect to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

Waheguru is manifest in Creation. The way to realise this is through Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) as evidence of Waheguru's existence and the way to obtain union with Waheguru is undoubtedly obtained from Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). Guruji adds that the fruit obtained will equal the amount of respect that is given to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). Whenever Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is in view, one should bow his or her head to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji at once with much humility and folded hands. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's darbar (hall) should be

decorated and scented. Great is the Sikh who respects and teaches others how to respect Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

After the Gurbani Pothi (book containing Gurbani) had been bound and placed in Harmandir Sahib, Guruji, from that day onwards, never sat on the throne and instead always sat lower than Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. At night in Kothi Sahib (later known as Akaal Takhat Sahib), when Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's sukh aasan (transfer to the place where the Guru is kept at night) was done, Guruji slept on the floor while Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was placed on the Menji Sahib (woven wooden bed). Until today, it can be seen in Akaal Takhat Sahib that a white cloth is placed below the Menji Sahib to signify the respect Guruji gave to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

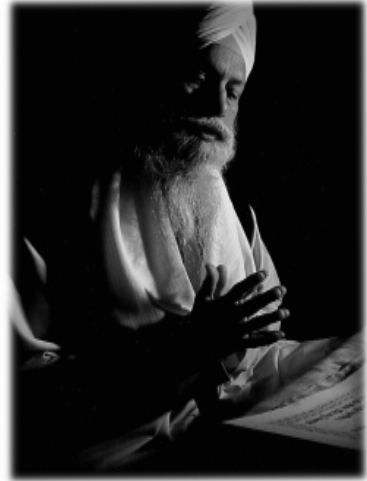
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Parkash at Home



Guruji even specified that if a Sikh has Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji at home and does the Guru's seva (service) and reads and listens to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) in the presence of the Guru, all of his troubles and difficulties will vanish and he will attain the highest level of spiritual awareness.

Taking Refuge in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

Guruji explained that a Sikh should always depend on Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). Going through one's life in both happiness and sorrow, a Sikh should read and listen to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). Such a Sikh will remain in bliss and be thankful for everything that happens in his life. Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) should be read or if listened to, it should be recited with proper punctuation and pronunciation and when the recitation is complete, *kerah pershad* (a sweet dish with equal parts of wheat flour, sugar and water) should be prepared and brought into Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's *hejjuri* (presence) and while standing, with folded hands, *Ardas* (a Sikh prayer) should be done faithfully according to the purpose for which the Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) was read. Guruji will grant any wish in accordance with Waheguru's *hukam* (will).



Guruji grants both worldly needs and afterlife salvation when Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is taken as the way of life by a Sikh. By reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) always, Waheguru's existence and remembrance will be permanently implanted internally with which all bad deeds will be pardoned and at the end of life's journey, the Sikh will not face *jamdoot* (the angels of death) but will immerse in Waheguru.

Guruji's Shaheedi

The principal Sikh shaheed (martyr) was Sri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji at Lahore who, having undergone extreme torture by the pappi (sinner), Chandu, went to the River Ravi and had ishnan (dipped in the river). After that, Guruji sat on the riverbank and recited Sri Japji Sahib. Around Guruji were five Sikhs who had gone with Guruji to Lahore, namely Bhai Bidhi Chand Ji, Bhai Jetha Ji, Bhai Changh Ji, Bhai Pirana Ji and Bhai Perra Ji. Guruji bowed his head in respect on completing Sri Japji Sahib. The five Sikhs bowed to Guruji after which he advised them to read Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) all the time and to stay in the sanctuary of the next Guru, Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji.

At that moment, a rebabi (a person who does kirtan using a musical instrument called a rebab) arrived and Guruji asked the rebabi to sit on higher ground and sing Gurbani kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru). After listening to the kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru), Guruji placed a cloth on the ground, lay on it and covered himself with another cloth and then left this world for his heavenly abode in Waheguru.

SRI GURU HARGOBIND SAHIB JI

The Greatness of Reading Gurbani

After winning the war at Hargobindpur, Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji requested a Sikh to come forward and read Sri Japji Sahib correctly. Listening to Guruji's instruction, Bhai Gopala Ji volunteered.



Throughout the time that he was reading Sri Japji Sahib, Bhai Gopala Ji did not think of anything in his mind. His mind was fully concentrated on Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). However, when he was about to end with the salok, Guruji was about to get up and give him the Gurgaddhi Tilak (crown of guruship). At that moment, he thought that Guruji was leaving without blessing him with a gift and spontaneously wished in his mind that Guruji would give him one of the two remaining horses, from the five horses donated by a rich Sikh from Kabul, which had a beautiful saddle which was embedded with diamonds. Guruji, the knower of all, sat back and after Bhai Gopala Ji completed the salok, Guruji told him that he had read Sri Japji Sahib with full concentration except for the salok part, when he was thinking of attaining the horse as a gift. He would have been granted power over the entire universe i.e. the guruship. But now Guruji told him that his wish of getting the horse will be fulfilled and he will be free of the cycle of birth and death as a reward for reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) correctly.

Respect for Gurbani

Guruji's mehal (wife) Mata Damodri Ji's sister, Bibi Ramo Ji, was married to Sai Dass Ji. Sai Dass Ji asked to have darshan of Guruji (see Guruji). Guruji accepted his request and planned to go and meet him. Before leaving Amritsar, Guruji went to Harmandir Sahib and did Ardas (a Sikh prayer) after he did four pekerma (circumambulations of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). Guruji then went to Akaal Takhat Sahib. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was placed right at the front of a beautiful palki and was followed behind by Guruji himself and sangat (congregation), in order to show respect for Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

Meaning of Gurbani

After meeting Mai Bhagbheri at Kashmir, on the way back, Guruji was resting under the shelter of a tree when a devoted Sikh, Bhai Karam Chand, who was immersed in Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), came to Guruji and requested Guruji to explain the meaning of Sri Japji Sahib. As most people usually came to Guruji for worldly happiness, on hearing Bhai Sahib's request, Guruji was very pleased and in the presence of other Sikhs, Guruji explained the meaning of Sri Japji Sahib. Guruji then described the benefits of reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

SRI GURU HAR RAI SAHIB JI

Respect for Gurbani

One day the treasure of mercy was sitting on a beautiful bed and as it was his resting time, Guruji lay down and slept in total bliss. After a while, two Sikhs came from a different country to meet Guruji and while they were approaching Guruji, they were singing Guruji's Gurbani kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru). Their hearts were filled with faith in the Guru. Upon arriving at the darbar (Guruji's court), they learned that Guruji was resting. They considered whether or not they should be singing the Guru's hymns as Guruji was resting and would be upset if he was disturbed. They remembered that Waheguru always remains in the turia avastha (the highest spiritual state) and that Guruji is a form of Waheguru who is also witness to all three human states (jagart (conscious), supan (sub-conscious) & sekopat



(unconscious)). After contemplating the facts, they were at ease and continued to sing in a melodious tune with utmost love.

Upon hearing the hymns, Guruji woke up and very quickly sat up with the intention to leave the bed. As Guruji was getting down from his bed, his knee hit the pava (bed's leg) very hard and was injured. Without bothering about his knee, Guruji stood up straight and folded his hands. The Sikhs who were there saw Guruji's swollen knee and started to massage the injured knee. Later, a Sikh folded his hands and asked Guruji, "Dear respectful True Guru, why did you awake? What caused you to stand up in such a rush?"

Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji replied, "Listen dear Sikhs, you are my most beloved ones. The true form of the Guru is Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). Therefore, Gurbani's (hymns of the Gurus) praises are beyond measurement and incomparable. If one reads Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), one's five enemies will be completely washed away. A Sikh who respects Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) shall be ferried across this dreadful worldly ocean without any difficulties. Gurbani's (hymns of the Gurus) greatness is far beyond description, therefore, if I don't set the precedent of respect for Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), how will other Sikhs offer their undoubtful faith and respect to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus)? Without respecting Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), no one can ever obtain salvation. In respect of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), I stood up quickly. A Sikh who practises Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) will definitely obtain the supreme level of salvation. A Sikh devoted to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is my true Sikh. However, the one who claims to be a Sikh without respecting Gurbani (hymns of

the Gurus), is not my Sikh (Jin bhea adab na bani dhara, janoh so sikh nahi hamara).”

Effect of Reading Gurbani

One day, some Sikhs asked Guruji whether those who read Gurbani without understanding it obtain any spiritual advantage from it. Guruji gave no reply at the time but the next morning went hunting. En route, the Guru came across a broken pot which had held butter. Sunrays were melting the butter on the fragments of the broken pot. Guruji took one of these fragments in his hand and said, "Look at these broken pot parts, my Sikhs. When they are heated, the butter on them readily melts. Just as the grease sticks to the pot, so does the Guru's Word stick to the heart. Whether understood or not, it has within it the seed of salvation. Perfume still clings to a broken vase." We learn that whosoever daily reads Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) shall surely obtain peace. And even though one may not fully understand it, Waheguru will undoubtedly assist the person to understand.

The Greatness of Gurbani



Once, Sikhs in a sangat (congregation) said, "Whoever is blessed by Guruji will have the ability to do seva (service) in the proper way. We are of very low intellect. With your merciful glance, our difficulties can disappear. Your words are like a boat that can ferry us across the

terrible world ocean.”

Guruji then spoke to the congregation. The development of spiritual awareness is like a growing tree. The reading of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is like providing fertile ground for the tree to grow. By understanding Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and contemplating it, the five evils and sins are all destroyed. Pure souls always meditate on Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). Meditation on the Waheguru’s Name creates strong currents in the mind which have the ability to destroy sins and replace them with universal love. The people who meditate on Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) reach higher spiritual states and remain connected with Waheguru within them. Waheguru’s Name, if meditated upon, has the power to liberate the soul. Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is like a lion which is able to overpower greed which is as strong as an elephant. Ignorance in the mind makes it very restless like a deer. By reciting Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), the deer mind of ours is easily brought under control.”

Gurbani is Perpetual

Guruji’s intelligent and smart prince or Sahibzada, Sri Ram Rai Ji, was sent to Delhi with blessings from Guruji. Guruji was to reside in his speech and whatever he would say would become reality. In fact, he displayed many miracles at King Aurengzeb’s assembly. Everyday, he was rewarded with thousands of rupees. One day, when Aurengzeb enquired the meaning of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) :-

“ **मिटी मुसलमान की** ” (Mitti Musalman Ki)

Ram Rai Ji changed it verbally to:-

“ मिटी बेईमान की ” (Mitti Be-iman Ki)

When Guruji came to know about this, with great disappointment, he said that Ram Rai had changed the Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) of the earlier Guru for which he may not come and see Guruji. Guruji further said that Ram Rai should remain wherever he was and must never come back to Guruji and that no Sikh should give him any offerings as he is expelled from the Gurughar (house of the Guru).

SRI GURU HAR KRISHAN SAHIB JI

Guruji's Test

Once a Sikh came to Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji and asked him that since both Guruji's Sahibzade (princes) were smart, fine-looking, full of decency, humble and full of radiance, who will be the successor to Guruji?



The next day, Guruji gave a needle to the Sikh and told him that the Sahibzade (princes) were reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) at the moment. The Sikh was asked to go and impale with a needle one of the legs of the wooden woven bed where Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was placed and was being read by each Sahibzada. While Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) was

being read by the Sahibzade, if the leg of the wooden bed became soft when this needle was pierced through, it would then be considered that that particular Sahibzada would succeed Guruji.

Accordingly, the Sikh initially went where Sri Ram Rai Ji was reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). After listening for a while, the Sikh tried to pierce the needle through the leg of the bed but was unsuccessful. After that, he went and sat where Sri Har Krishan Ji was and listening to the Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) being read there, the Sikh felt a lot of bliss. When he pierced the leg of the wooden bed with the needle, it went through easily as if it was piercing through wax. Once that needle went through the bed's leg, it was not retrievable.

While reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), Guruji was so absorbed that he was already immersed in Waheguru. The wooden legs of the bed became soft just like wax. Similarly, a hardhearted person will become as soft as wax when the Guru's Shabad (the Guru's Word) pierces his heart, leading him all the way to eternity.

Even though Sri Ram Rai Ji had been reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and knew the meaning of the Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) he was reading, he was lacking on true devotional love and therefore was not yielding himself to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). That was the reason he failed the test.

Gurbani is Guruji's Darshan

When Aurengzeb wanted to have Guruji's darshan (audience with Guruji) during Guruji's stay in Dehli, Guruji sent him a shabad (hymn) and a message saying that he may contemplate that particular shabad (hymn) so that his wish to build an everlasting empire would be granted by Waheguru. Guruji further wrote that the real darshan (experience) of Guruji will be obtained through the shabad (hymn) as Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is Guruji's heart.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's Greatness

When Guruji was preparing to leave his physical body, the sangat (congregation) were very sad and greatly concerned that Guruji was leaving at such a young age. Considering this, Guruji gave the sangat (congregation) guidance to have Sri Guru Granth Sahib's Ji's darshan with full devotion in order to have Guruji's darshan (see Guruji). Whoever wished to talk to Guruji may read or listen to Gurbani. On doing this, Guruji would grant the person all the four greatest treasures ([i] adherence to religion i.e. to be forgiving, loving, kind, humble, honest, devout, philanthropic, firm, hygienic and without greed; [ii] to have a respected position in society; [iii] accomplishment of desires and [iv] moksha).

Guruji added that all the Sikhs' problems and troubles will be immediately eliminated and their desires fulfilled once they enter Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's sanctuary. A devotee will obtain everything while a person without devotion will be left empty-handed. Nobody will live forever, time is limited, therefore the Sikhs must devote their heart wholly to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It is important to have darshan of the Guru (be in the Guru's presence) and bow the forehead

before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji daily. By doing this, Guruji said that all sins will be washed away and spiritual knowledge will be obtained.

SRI GURU TEGH BAHADUR SAHIB JI

Achieving Happiness through Gurbani



When Guruji left Bekala because of other Sodhis' jealousy towards him, together with Bhai Makhan Shah, Guruji went to Sri Anandpur Sahib. As Bhai Makhan Shah was departing from Sri Anandpur Sahib back to his village, Guruji told him to remember Satnam (the Name of Waheguru i.e. the Truth) all the time and read Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) to achieve everlasting peace.

Authority of Gurbani

At Sri Anandpur Sahib, a demon called Makho was roaming around and basically ruled the place where Guruji wanted to reside, bringing fear to the local people and whoever came to that particular place. The demon had been there for 700 years. When Guruji came to build a settlement there, after some time the demon came to Guruji and started pleading for mercy as he could not stand the singing of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). The demon told Guruji that he was residing nearby and since Guruji had come to the place, staying there had become impossible for him because, whenever the sangat (congregation) sang Gurbani kirtan (hymns of the Gurus in praise of Waheguru) and Sikhs

read Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) aloud, the demon felt much suffering. From this sakhi (story), it is clear that evil souls are extracted from any place where Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is sung or read.

Strength of Gurbani

When the fatwa (judgement) of sawing Bhai Mati Dass Ji was announced, Guruji told Bhai Sahib Ji to do Sri Japji Sahib during the execution. The next day when Bhai Sahib Ji was placed between two wooden planks and when the jellaluddin jelad (executioner) gave the order to saw Bhai Sahib Ji head first, Bhai Sahib Ji, as instructed by Guruji started reciting Sri Japji Sahib. When the saw divided Bhai Mati Dass Ji's body into two parts, at that particular moment, Bhai Sahib Ji was just starting the 16th pauri (stanza) of Sri Japji Sahib. Even though the body was in two parts, the remainder of Sri Japji Sahib could still be heard emanating from both parts of the body until it was completed, just like two Sikhs were doing the paath (prayer) together. On seeing this miracle, the onlookers were astonished as to how Sikhs are blended in Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) which gives them so much courage and even though the body had died, the spirit of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) lived on i.e. this is the spirit that sends Sikhs up to the highest level of spiritual awareness ultimately immersing them in Waheguru.

Gurbani Will Remain

During the imprisonment of Guruji, by order of the cruel King Aurengzeb, Guruji bestowed the Guruship to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji from the cell where he was imprisoned. Guruji also sent a message, a salok for Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji which stated that only Naam (Waheguru's Name), its practitioner and eventually Waheguru will remain in this world.

Gurbani during Shaheedi

In Chandni Chowk, Delhi, protecting the right to freedom of religion, just before Guruji's shaheedi (martyrdom), Guruji instructed the jelad (executioner) that only once Guruji had completed Sri Japji Sahib and then bowed in respect of Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) may he swing the sword.

SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH SAHIB JI

Reading Gurbani Correctly

During Guruji's stay in Sri Anandpur Sahib, once there was a Sikh who was reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) with incorrect pronunciation. Hearing him, Guruji sent a Sikh to ask him to read Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) correctly but he continued reading wrongly. Guruji sent the Sikh again and this time the Sikh reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) was disciplined by Guruji's instruction. Guruji told him that by reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) wrongly i.e. with wrong pronunciation, he is literally breaking parts of Guruji's body.



Gurbani is the Treasure of Blissfulness

A Sikh came to Guruji and requested to learn Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). Guruji



instructed a granthi (priest) to teach the Sikh. On the first day, when the granthi (priest) started teaching him how to read Anand Sahib (Prayer of Bliss), after finishing the first line of the paath (prayer), the Sikh went away and did not come back. When Guruji got to know about this, he called the Sikh to him and asked him the reason for not turning up. The Sikh told Guruji that after contemplating the first line of the paath (prayer), he obtained so much harmony that he achieved a state of blissfulness and had been left with no more desires. Guruji told him that however high his spiritual level is, the need for Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) is still essential. Guruji asked him to continue learning Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). It is like a tree on a riverbank; even though it does not need rain to fulfil its water requirement, it still needs it to clean it from dust and cobwebs etc. Similarly, even though a person may have reached very high spiritual awareness, he still needs to maintain himself free of the slightest ego by continuing reading and practising Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

Guruji's Updesh (Teachings)

Guruji says that great is the Sikh who reads Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) with full concentration. Waheguru is always with him and so he will experience the great sensation of continuous flow of amrit (Waheguru's Name) in him.

Create the habit of reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) as a way of life. Also, read, listen to or practise Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) in the form of a sangat (congregation).

Before Guruji left for his heavenly abode in Waheguru, he told his Sikhs that whoever reads Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) with devotion, will be attached to Waheguru in mind. Guruji instructed Sikhs to keep

the Sikh Code of Conduct as explained by Guruji in his Rehatnama (documented Code of Conduct) along with the practice of reading Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus). When Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) starts to penetrate a Sikh's inner self, the enemy in the form of five evils (lust, anger, greed, emotional attachment and ego) will be defeated.

Guruji's Darshan

The great kavi (poet) of Guruji, Bhai Nand Lal Ji, requested Guruji to clarify how and from where to have Guruji's everlasting darshan (experience Guruji). Guruji explained that there are actually three forms of Guruji. They are Nirgun (without attributes), Gurshabad (the Word) and Sargun (immanency).

The Nirgun form of Guruji is beyond maya (the cause of every existence in the universe) and beyond any logical explanation. All religious books define it as infinite. This invisible form exists in every atom just as droplets of water exist in the clouds but are not visible.

The Sargun form is the physical form of Guruji i.e. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji which is also the Gurshabad. Guruji explained that Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the body of Guruji and each Gurmukhi (Punjabi alphabet) letter is a strand of Guruji's bodily hair. One who wishes to experience Guruji, may do so through Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. He must get up during amrit vela (the early hours of the morning) and do pekerma (circumambulations of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) and then with devotion listen to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus), absorbing the mind in Gurbani's (hymns of the Gurus) meaning. Doing so, he may have Guruji's darshan (experience Guruji). If he wishes to converse with Guruji, he should read or listen to Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus).

The Recomposition of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

After the battle of Chamkaur, Guruji went to Sabo Ki Talwandi where he stayed for more than nine months at the request of Bhai Della Singh. One day, after Guruji finished hunting, he decided to rest and opened his kemerkesa



(a cloth wrapped around the waist which is used to secure weapons). Following this incident, the name of this place came to be known as Damdama Sahib. This is also the place where Dhir Mal who was Baba Gurditta Ji's son resided. He had the earlier compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. When Guruji asked for the copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Dhir Mal refused to hand it over and instead asked Guruji that if he is so capable of leading the Khalsa Panth (Sikh community), why Guruji couldn't recompose the whole of the dharm granth (religious scripture) Himself.

Guruji, in the presence of 48 Sikhs, started dictating Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) every day. Bhai Mani Singh Ji was selected as the writer. In the morning, Guruji used to dictate Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) and the meaning of the dictated Gurbani was explained in the evening. Without any reference, Guruji dictated Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) by heart which was exactly the same as when it was originally uttered

by the earlier Gurus. In addition, Guruji incorporated Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's Bani (hymns). The whole process took nine months.

Baba Deep Singh Ji was selected as granthi (custodian priest) for the completed Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and a Taksal (institution) was also established for the purpose of teaching and Gurbani (hymns of the Gurus) education. Baba Deep Singh Ji, who was in charge of the new Taksal, wrote four additional copies of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji which were later sent to Akaal Takhat, Takhat Sri Patna Sahib, Takhat Sri Damdama Sahib and Takhat Sri Kesgarh Sahib.

The original copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, which was written by Bhai Mani Singh, was given the Gurgaddhi Tilak (crown of guruship) and then kept by Buddha Dal. This copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, which was also known as the Damdami Bir, was available until 5th February 1762 when the Wadda Galughara (Great Holocaust) took place. It was written by Bhai Rattan Singh Bhanggu and after the invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali, all the Sikhs who were protecting the Damdami Bir were martyred and the Bir was confiscated by Abdali who then took it with him to Kabul. Dr. Hari Ram Gupta in his book, 'History of the Sikhs,' wrote that the Damdami Bir was taken by Abdali to Kabul and until today it is preserved in a house of worship there.



The Eternal Guru

As mentioned at the beginning of this booklet, three days before immersing in Waheguru, Guruji bestowed guruship to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Before the ceremony took place, Guruji instructed five Sikhs to do an Akhand Paath (continuous recitation of the whole of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) which Guruji listened to in one sitting of 48 hours.

The above is a small extract of our Guruji's life which signifies the greatness of Gurbani. This article is brought to the sangat by SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI ACADEMY AND UNITED SIKHS as our humble service. Our hope and optimism is that the sangat will believe and worship Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as an eternal Guru, the physical form of all the ten Gurus and with absolute faith and utmost respect devote themselves fully to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. We seek everyone's goodwill in the service of Guruji to deliver this booklet to every Sikh so that any misconception or doubt about Gurbani fades away and dedication towards Guruji is built.



**DHAN DHAN SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB
JI**